

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 8, 2005 has been received and its contents carefully considered. The present Amendment revises the claims in response, as will be discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, the present Amendment revises a paragraph in the specification in order to introduce terminology that is now employed in the claims.

Section 3 of the Office Action objects to the last Amendment on new-matter grounds, and section 6 rejects the claims for essentially the same reason. The Office Action takes the position that revising the claims, in the last Amendment, to recite “URLs” and “receiving in said local computer, the notification of completion of the booking and the booking data of the predetermined format” went beyond what was supported by the original disclosure. Although Applicant does not agree with this conclusion, the issue is moot because the present Amendment revises the claims so as to avoid the language criticized in the Office Action. More particularly, the present Amendment replaces the claim language “URL” with “home page address.” Home page addresses are mentioned, for example, in the paragraph at page 10 of the application, lines 14-23, and in the paragraph at page 11, lines 7-14. In addition, “receiving, in said local computer, the notification of completion of the booking and the booking data of the predetermined format” has been replaced by “receiving, in said net server, the booking data of the predetermined format.” This is supported (for example) by the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13 of the application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the objection under 35 USC 132 and the rejection under the first paragraph of 35 USC 112 have been overcome.

Turning now to section 8 of the Office Action, claim 1 has been rejected for indefiniteness on account of two informalities. The present Amendment corrects both of these informalities, so the rejection should be withdrawn.

Section 10 of the Office Action rejects independent claims 1 and 2 (along with two dependent claims) for obviousness on the basis of Hunt et al (hereafter simply “Hunt”), Garback, and Rangan. For the reasons discussed below, however, it is respectfully submitted that the inventions now defined by claims 1 and 2 are patentable over these references.

The preamble of claim 1 is now directed to a system that includes a net server, an issuing terminal that is interconnected to the net server via a LAN and that is also interconnected to external reservation systems via at least one communication line, and a personal computer that is interconnected to the net server via the LAN. The body of claim 1 then recites a booking step and an issuance step. The booking step of claim 1 has several sub-steps, which provide generally that the net server sends the home page addresses of the external reservation systems to the personal computer via the local area network, and that a user selects one of the external reservation systems and visits its website so that the user can complete a booking, whereupon the personal computer sends booking data having a predetermined format to the net server. The issuance step of claim 1 provides generally that the net server sends a booking number that is included in the booking data to the issuing terminal, which then sends the booking number to the external reservation system that was selected. The issuing terminal then receives ticket issuing data from the selected external reservation system and issues the ticket.

It will be apparent that the “local computer” that was previously recited in claim 1 has now been separated into “a net server” and “an issuing terminal.” A key feature of the

invention now recited by claim 1 is that the net server communicates with the personal computer and the issuing terminal but not the external reservation systems, while the personal computer and the issuing terminal communicate with the external reservation system that the user has selected. The net server provides the internet addresses (that is, the home page addresses) of the external reservation systems to the personal computer and also serves to store booking data (including a booking number) received from the personal computer after the user has completed a booking with one of the external reservation systems. However, the net server is not directly involved in the booking procedure with the selected external reservation system. During the ticket issuing procedure, the net server sends the booking number to the issuing terminal, which then communicates with the selected external reservation system and issues the ticket.

The Hunt reference discloses a host computer that interacts with an external reservation system during the booking procedure. Hunt uses application interfaces that are resident on a server and that assist a client computer by receiving a request from the client computer and sending the request to the external reservation system.

The Garback reference includes a user terminal 22, but it is Garback's computer based system 10 that communicates with airline computer reservation systems 28 to book tickets.

The Office Action, at the bottom of page 7 and top of page 8, acknowledges that the Hunt reference does not disclose various features, but takes the position that these features are taught by Garback. Applicant respectfully disagrees. For example, the bottom paragraph on page 8 of the Office Action says (in general) that Garback teaches connecting a personal computer to a website of a selected external reservation system accessed over a wide area network. In support of this contention, the Office Action quotes two passages that appear to

arise from Garback's statements at column 5, lines 34-40. However, the "central processing unit" that is specified in these statements clearly refers to a CPU in Garback's computer based system 10 (see Garback's column 5, lines 20-40) rather than a CPU in his terminal 22. That is, Garback's terminal 22 is not connected to Garback's CRSs.

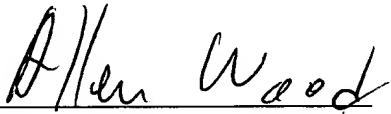
The Rangan reference is directed to internet navigation and browsing, and not specifically to a ticket booking and issuing system. The Office Action takes the position that Rangan teaches "receiving, in said personal computer, a selection of one of said external reservation systems by the user and reading out the URL of the selected reservation system in said memory." Applicant respectfully disagrees. Perhaps a computer user whose job requires frequent flights to different cities might store the websites of various airlines as "favorites" in a browser such as Internet Explorer, and then select one of these favorites to call up the related website when a trip is necessary, but this is certainly not a "teaching" of the Rangan reference. There is no reason why Rangan and Garback would have provided an incentive to modify what is disclosed by Hunt so as to achieve the invention now defined by claim 1.

Independent claim 2 is an apparatus claim, rather than a method claim like claim 1, but claim 2 has been modified by the present Amendment in a manner similar to the revisions discussed above with respect to claim 1. Since claim 2 corresponds generally to claim 1, except that it has been cast in apparatus form, it is respectfully submitted that claim 2 is patentable over the references for reasons along the lines discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Rejected claims 3-6 depend from the independent claims and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, so they are patentable along with their independent claims and need not be further discussed.

For the forgoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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